



# American Citizen Newsletter U.S. Consulate General Belfast

**Dear American Community,**

Happy Fourth of July! A lot has happened here in Northern Ireland since we last celebrated America's Independence Day. Most heartening has been the realization of a political settlement in Northern Ireland and the prospects for real peace and prosperity here. On the Mall this week in Washington, Northern Ireland is being featured as part of the two week Smithsonian Folklife Festival. I can't think of a better time for Americans to "rediscover" Northern Ireland, its natural beauty and its culture, through the words and works of over 160 local artists, athletes, storytellers who have traveled to the United States to be part of the festival. Sadly for me this will be my last July 4th in Northern Ireland. I return to Washington, DC in August for my next assignment. My successor, Susan Elliot, will be here in September and she has told me how excited she is about taking up her duties as Consul General. I know she will do a terrific job. Best wishes and happy Independence Day to you all.

Regards,

Dean Pittman  
Consul

## **Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) – Update to Requirements**

Due to longer than expected processing times for passport applications in the face of the record-breaking demand, the U.S. Department of State and Department of Homeland Security announced that they will allow U.S. citizens whose passport applications are pending to travel by air, land and sea into the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda with photo identification and proof of their pending passport application. For more information, see [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc\\_2223.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html). For information on the Proposed Rulemaking for the land and sea portion of the WHTI, go to [http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr\\_182350422171.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xnews/releases/pr_182350422171.shtm).

## **E-Passports Now Being Issued to Overseas Applicants**

The recently introduced American e-Passport is now also being issued to Americans overseas who apply for passports at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad, including those who apply within the United Kingdom. This new passport contains colorful artwork

representing unique scenic landscapes from around the United States. It also includes the latest in high tech security features. The most notable of these security features is the inclusion of an "electronic chip" that stores an electronic record of the same biographic information that is printed on the passport, making it harder to forge or alter a passport.

There's no need to run out and get a new U.S. passport right away, however. If your current one remains valid, we recommend that you wait to replace it until it has about six months validity remaining. Don't worry: the old passport is still good for travel until it expires!

For more information about renewing your U.S. passport, please see our website at <http://london.usembassy.gov/nireland/nipass.html>.



### **Wedding Bells: Changing Your Name on Your U.S. Passport**

June and July are commonly known as the months for weddings. This means that there are many brides who may want to take on new last names. You can apply for a new passport because of a name change through marriage by mailing your application by Royal Mail Special Delivery to Passport Services, U.S. Consulate General, Danesfort House, 223 Stranmillis Road, Belfast, BT9 5GR. See our website for documentary requirements at <http://london.usembassy.gov/nireland/nipassmail.html>.

### **Social Security Issues: Name Change**

In addition to the name change on your U.S. passport, it is important for you to update your name on Social Security's records. If you need to change your name on your Social Security card, you must show proof of your legal name change. Documents that Social Security may accept to prove a legal name change are:

- Marriage document
- Divorce decree specifically stating you may change your name
- Certificate of Naturalization showing a new name
- Court order for a name change.

If the documents you provide for a legal name change do not give enough information to identify you (date of birth or age and previous name), then you must also show two identity documents:

- A document with your old name
- A second document with your new legal name.

In addition to your name, these documents must contain identifying information (date of birth or age) or a recent photograph. Find more details and the application form SS-5, on the Social Security Agency website, <http://www.ssa.gov>.

### **International Travel Tips: Insurance**

When traveling overseas, it's easy to focus on planning for the fun you're going to have. You always remember to pack beach toys and swimsuits, you plan your driving routes to catch all the sites, and you take orders from friends on

local food and drink to bring back. What many people don't plan for is the not-so-fun, from unexpected flight, hotel and tour cancellations to accidents or serious illnesses.

Travel insurance companies offer a wide range of plans to compensate travelers who lose deposits or other fees due to unforeseen circumstances. In addition, many provide coverage for injuries, hospitalizations, injuries to third parties, search and rescue costs, and legal costs. In addition, some policies cover medical evacuation in the event of serious illness or accident. These costs can reach, in the worst case, hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Every traveler should also talk to their health insurance company before traveling abroad to see what coverage is available. If medical evacuation (medevac) is not included, you should consider taking out supplemental insurance for that purpose. You can visit [http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health\\_1185.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html) for more information.

### Summer Travel for Non-Americans

Do your summer travel plans include visiting the United States with a non-American family member or friend? If the answer is yes, your traveling companions should review U.S. visa and Visa Waiver Program (VWP) requirements online at the Consulate's website, [http://london.usembassy.gov/cons\\_new/visa/niv/vwp.html](http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/visa/niv/vwp.html). United States law requires visa-free travelers to be in possession of modern, tamper-resistant travel documents, in the form of either a

Machine Readable Passport (MRP) or a "biometric" e-passport, depending upon the passport's date of issuance. Almost all British and Irish Citizens' passports qualify, but please note the following criteria:

**Machine Readable Passports:** Passports **issued or renewed before October 26, 2005** must be machine readable. A machine-readable passport has two lines of text as letters, numbers and chevrons (<<<) at the bottom of the personal information page, along with the bearer's picture.

**Digital Photograph Passports:** All new passports **issued or renewed between October 26, 2005 - October 25, 2006** must include digital photographs. A digital photo is one that is printed on the page, not glued or laminated into the passport.

**E-Passports:** Passports **issued or renewed on or after October 26, 2006** must be e-passports. This type of passport includes an integrated computer chip that can store biographic information from the data page, as well as other biometric information, such as the required digital photograph of the holder.

For more information on VWP please use our VWP wizard at [http://london.usembassy.gov/cons\\_new/visa/visa\\_wizard.html](http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/visa/visa_wizard.html).



## Voting Information – Problems with Toll Free Numbers

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP), the government agency responsible for assisting Americans overseas to register to vote absentee, maintains worldwide toll-free access number for voters who need advice and assistance. They have informed us that they are currently experiencing technical difficulties with the Voting Information Center and worldwide toll-free access numbers, so voters with questions or concerns are encouraged to use the FVAP’s website, <http://www.fvap.gov> or to contact the program via email at [vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov) until these technical difficulties are resolved.

Questions regarding this phone outage may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, 703-588-1584, or [vote@fvap.ncr.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.ncr.gov).

## Information on Food Recalls and Health Advisories

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has in recent months put out notices on tainted, possibly harmful, products including notices on certain brands, including peanut butter, pet food, contact lens solution, and toothpaste. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) also disseminated a notice on drug-resistant tuberculosis. Although each of these notices has varying levels of direct applicability to American citizens resident in the United Kingdom, both of these agencies maintain excellent websites where up-to-date information

on these and other health issues can be found.

The FDA website, <http://www.fda.gov>, provides information on topics related to food safety and recalls. The site allows you to subscribe both to multi-media feeds (<http://www.fda.gov/oc/rss/>), and to receive email newsletters on several topics (<http://www.fda.gov/emaillist.html> ).

The CDC’s website, <http://www.cdc.gov>, has a service allowing interested people to receive email updates on a wide variety of issues, including traveler’s health, healthy living, and emergency preparedness and response. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/emailupdates/> to subscribe.



## International Student Resources

The Department of State offers a good resource for students researching or studying American issues. The International Information Program’s (IIP) new Student Corner is an invaluable tool. For many it will serve as a positive introduction to U.S. culture, education and public policy, and it also provides materials for school assignments and other projects. IIP’s Student Corner can be found at <http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/students>. Have a look!



**SPOTLIGHT:**

**Consular Report of Birth Abroad**

This is the first in a series of articles highlighting specific consular services available to American citizens abroad. This quarter the focus is on a Consular Report of Birth Abroad.

Children born abroad to U.S. citizen parents may have a claim to U.S. citizenship. The birth abroad of a child to a U.S. citizen may be reported at this Consulate General and, if the parent(s) meets the criteria for transmitting citizenship, a Consular Report of Birth, U.S. passport, and Social Security number may be issued. We strongly recommend that U.S. citizen parents report births as soon as possible for the purpose of establishing an official record of the child's claim to U.S. citizenship at birth. It is not possible to report the birth of a child aged 18 or over, although it is still possible to obtain a passport for such a child if s/he has a claim to U.S. citizenship. **Even if your child holds the nationality of a country other than the U.S., if your child is a U.S. citizen, s/he must be in possession of a valid U.S. passport to enter and exit the United States.**

The following information will assist you in determining whether or not your child is a U.S. citizen and will outline the steps that you are required to take to register the birth and obtain his or her passport:

**Transmission Requirements For U.S. Citizenship:**

**Child born in wedlock to two U.S. citizens:** A child born outside of the United States or its outlying possessions to two U.S. citizen parents is entitled to citizenship, provided one of the parents had, prior to the birth of the child, been resident in the United States or one of its outlying possessions. (No specific period of residence is required.)

**Child born in wedlock to one U.S. citizen parent and one non-U.S. citizen parent on or after November 14, 1986:** A child born outside of the United States to one U.S. citizen parent and one non-U.S. citizen parent may be entitled to citizenship provided the U.S. citizen parent had been physically present in the United States or one of its outlying possessions for five years, at least two years of which were after s/he reached the age of fourteen. This period of physical presence is cumulative and must have taken place prior to the birth of the child.

**Child born in wedlock to one U.S. citizen parent and one non-U.S. citizen parent**

**between December 24, 1952, and November 13, 1986:** A child born outside of the United States to one U.S. citizen parent and one non-U.S. citizen parent may be entitled to citizenship provided the U.S. citizen parent had, prior to the birth of the child, been physically present in the United States for a period of ten years, at least five years of which were after s/he reached the age of fourteen.

**Child born out of wedlock to a U.S. citizen mother:** A child born outside of the United States and out of wedlock to a U.S. citizen mother is entitled to U.S. citizenship provided the U.S. citizen mother had been physically present in the United States for a continuous period of at least one year at some time prior to the birth of her child..

**Child born out of wedlock to a U.S. citizen father:** A child born outside of the United States to a U.S. citizen father who is not married to the non-U.S. citizen mother is entitled to citizenship provided the U.S. citizen father had been physically present in the United States for the period of time as specified in previous paragraphs for children born in wedlock to one U.S. citizen and one non-U.S. citizen parent, either before or after November 14, 1986; **and**

- a blood relationship between the applicant and the father is established by clear and convincing evidence; **and**
- the father (unless deceased) signs a sworn statement agreeing to provide financial support for the child until s/he reaches the age of 18 years; **and**
- the father provides a written statement acknowledging paternity; **or**
- the child is legitimated (for details, contact [consularbelfast@state.gov](mailto:consularbelfast@state.gov)); **or**
- paternity is established by a competent court before the child attains the age of 18 years.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**I believe that my child has claim to U.S. citizenship. What next?**

Call the Consulate General to make an appointment to apply for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a U.S. citizen. Please be sure to bring whatever documentation you may have that can help establish that you meet the criteria stated above.

**Can my U.S. military service overseas count as physical presence in the United States for the purposes of transmission of citizenship?**

If a parent is enlisted or dependant at a U.S. military base overseas, this time may be calculated as physical presence in the U.S., except for the purposes of a child born out of wedlock to a U.S. citizen mother, who must have lived continuously for 1 year in the United States or its outlying possessions.

**What if I do not meet the requirements for transmission of citizenship to my child?**

It may be possible for your child to apply for expeditious naturalization or an immigrant visa. Find details at [http://london.usembassy.gov/cons\\_new/acs/passports/act.html](http://london.usembassy.gov/cons_new/acs/passports/act.html) .

**I am over the age of 18 and I believe I have a claim to U.S. citizenship. What next?**

If your parent(s) had the requisite physical presence in the United States required by U.S. citizenship law in effect at that time, you should call the Consulate General to apply for U.S. passport. Please be sure to bring whatever documentation you may have that can help establish that your parents met the criteria stated above.



### News and Views: Your FAQ's!

The U.S. Consulate General will introduce a new feature in next quarter's American Citizen Newsletter. It's a section all about you! We want to hear your questions on issues relating to U.S. citizens living and working in Northern Ireland. Is there a topic of interest that you want to inquire about? Put your questions to the team at the U.S. Consulate and we will try our best to get you the answer.

Email your questions to: [Consularbelfast@state.gov](mailto:Consularbelfast@state.gov) . In the subject line of your email please put **ACS - FAQs**. We will select a random sample of the questions and put them in next quarter's newsletter.

### Culture Corner

The U.S. Consulate General occasionally provides partial grants for cultural events which have an American element. Some of these events are free, for others there is a charge. In this quarter, we encourage you to check out the *Ulster American Folk Park 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Appalachian and Bluegrass Music Festival - August 31, 2007 - September 2, 2007* - A must for all fans of Bluegrass and American Folk music. Booking is required for evening concerts. Go to [http://www.folkpark.com/whats\\_on/events/?article=1344](http://www.folkpark.com/whats_on/events/?article=1344) or contact 028 8224 3292 for booking information.



### Consulate Closure Dates

The U.S. Consulate General Belfast will be closed on the following dates:

- Wednesday, July 4, 2007** – Independence Day
- Thursday & Friday, July 12 & 13, 2007** – Orangeman's Holiday
- Monday, August 27, 2007** – Summer Bank Holiday
- Monday, September 3, 2007** – Labor Day

**Contact Information:**  
**American Citizen Services:**  
**02890-386104**

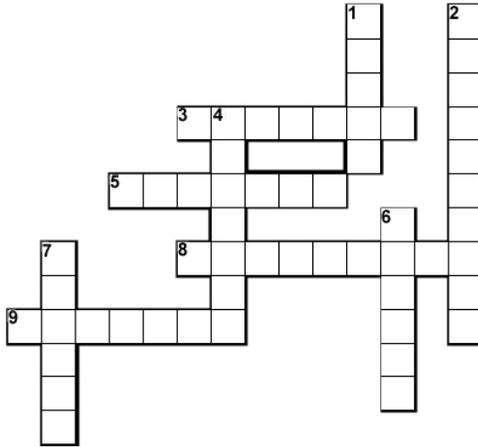
For all other inquires, please contact our office via email:  
[consularbelfast@state.gov](mailto:consularbelfast@state.gov)

**In the case of a life or death emergency of an American Citizen, the out-of-hours phone number is 0870-2385428**

# Kids Corner



## A Crossword



**ACROSS:**

- 3. Our last President
- 5. Was the youngest U.S. President and was shot in Dallas, TX
- 8. This president loved nature and most children in the U.S. have a toy bear named after him.
- 9. His wife was known as Lady Bird

**DOWN:**

- 1. Was forced to resign because of the Watergate scandal
- 2. The first United States President
- 4. Was shot by John Wilkes Booth
- 6. Former actor
- 7. Had a large dam named after him

ANSWERS: 1. Nixon; 2. Washington; 3. Clinton; 4. Lincoln; 5. Kennedy; 6. Reagan; 7. Hoover; 8. (Teddy) Roosevelt; 9. Johnson

Celebrate American Independence Day! Color in the flag!

